

## MANUAL HANDLING Don't Dice With Safety



If It's Too Heavy  
Get Help And Share The Load

### Injury Prevention Reminders.....

- Manual material handling is often a contributing factor in injuries associated with overexertion, a leading cause of work-related disability.
- Overexertion involves injuries related to lifting, pushing, pulling, holding, carrying or throwing. Sprains and strains from lifting comprise about one-third of total musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) reported to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). A **sprain** involves stretching or tearing of a ligament, the fibrous tissue that connects bones to bones. A **strain** involves either a muscle or tendon, which connects muscles to bones.
- It's important to remind staff to take preventive steps when manually handling materials and doing other tasks that demand physical exertion. When workers are fatigued or distracted while handling materials, their risk for strains and sprains increases. Older workers may be more susceptible to injury due to other health issues and diminished strength and flexibility over time.
- Material handling injury risk factors include awkward movements such as twisting, climbing, reaching or stooping; attempting to move material over long distances; skipping scheduled breaks; multi-tasking and moving too quickly; and wearing clothes, gloves or PPE that restrict movement.

## Reducing Material Handling Injury Risk

### Simple Precautions Have Big Impacts

Repeated safe material handling reminders may be perceived as a tedious aspect of workplace injury prevention programs, but they are necessary. When busy employees get into a routine, they are less likely to notice changing conditions such as slippery or uneven surfaces, hidden objects or poor lighting. **They may also forget to take added precautions when a load is:**

- Heavy, large or awkwardly shaped
  - Too high or low for a safe lift
- Wet, slippery or sharp around the edges
- Shifting due to liquid or viscous contents
- Blocking line of sight around, over and under

**Here are some simple injury prevention tips for handling materials:**

- Always warm up and stretch. March in place or walk briskly, then gently stretch legs, arms, shoulders and back.
- When necessary, separate a load into manageable parts or get a partner.
  - Use good body mechanics when lifting: Position the object in front of you



- Use a wide stance and bend your knees
  - Keep your head and back as straight and upright as possible
  - Hold elbows close to your body
  - Take deep breaths
- Use your core, the “power zone” for lifting
- Take your time; **haste** increases risk.
- Find ways to avoid twisting, over-reaching, carrying loads on one shoulder and lifting above shoulder level.
- If needed, lose weight. Being overweight by even a few pounds puts stress on the back and stomach muscles.



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